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"...Write the vision and make it plain on the tablet so that it might be read quickly."

Habakkuk 2:2 (LEB)

Spring Minister/Spouse Gathering



On the Battleship Wisconsin

Minister's and spouses from across the Commonwealth gathered at Norfolk First Church of God March 13-14. Resource Leader, Rev. Miki Meritt, Presiding elder of the National Association of the Church of God taught from the scripture John 15: 1-17. Among others, points made that spoke to COGVA Leadership gathered included the reminder of our need to be connected to the Vine as our source for all we are and all we have need of. We were also reminded that if we are to be people of God, we must recognize that, as we are connected to the Vine, we are connected to one another. Our relationship to God mandates our relationship to one another. Continuing on, being connected to the Vine and to one another,

we have a responsibility to produce fruit. Fruit is often visualized as new souls added to the Kingdom, but Rev. Meritt aptly reminded us that, in order to see souls birthed into the Kingdom, we (the church) must have fruit that the abiding presence of God's Holy Spirit produces – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Unless we exhibit these characteristics, we run the risk of not producing fruit and being cut-off from the Vine.

There was a change to the schedule for the Executive Board Meeting that was to take place at 1:00 pm (the traditional time). The change to 9:00 am was made to accommodate the concern of participants who were not involved in the Executive Board Meeting having to deal with the issue of dealing with "dead time". The Ministry of Programming looked for an opportunity to free the afternoon and offer COGVA Ministers and spouses an opportunity for a group activity. Rev.

Harold Boyd suggested a trip to the Nauticus, a museum featuring history of the Norfolk/Newport News Ports and culminating with a self-guided tour of the Battleship Wisconsin, berthed at the Nauticus facility. There were 21 in attendance and those who went as a group to the Nauticus enjoyed the company of brothers and sisters who don't get together often enough. Opportunities of fellowship like this foster conversation, build relationships, and strengthen the Church of God in Virginia.

Kudos go to the Norfolk First Church of God and Pastor Harold Boyd for their graciousness and generosity as they served as host to our group for the Spring 2015 Minister and Spouse Gathering. The Fall Minister's and Spouse Gathering will take place October 30-31 with Jim Lyon, General Director of Church of God Ministries serving as Resource Leader at Abingdon First Church of God.

I've Been Thinkin...



**Dr. Bob Neace COGVA
State Minister**

March certainly was a busy month. Beginning with the Minister's and Spouse Gathering March 13-14 (Norfolk), Youth Convention the following weekend (Charlottesville), and ending with the Men's Ministry Training at 21st CHOG Richmond (News to be shared from this gathering in May 2015 COGVA News), and C.W.C./W.C.G. Eastern Region Annual Prayer Breakfast at Riverside CHOG (also with news in May 2015 issue of COGVA News) COGVA has had opportunities of fellowship and growth for almost every demographic found in our churches. We are certainly an active bunch of people.

One of the activities I was able to avail myself of was the State Youth Convention of the Church of God in Virginia. Attendance was smaller than some of our previous years, but what I saw there caused me to pause and give some thought to what is going on in COGVA. In various settings where youth groups gathered in smaller numbers, whether in a conference setting, food pantry ministry, or just to see them gather from various churches, it

was very obvious there is a blending of a variety of cultural backgrounds. These youth coming to convention had a make-up of faces and skin-tones very much different than mine. Looking at the make-up of specific youth groups in local settings of COGVA, it would not always be easy to determine the cultural background of which some of our local congregations are made. This is very encouraging to me as we move forward toward our goals of serving God and serving one another in unity. Whether they know it or not, our young people, (the generation younger than me - those in their teens to forties) are setting examples of living out unity among ourselves. Those setting these examples are worthy of our attention. Pastors and local church leaders are making this impact in their local communities. Let's pray for those making these differences and let us continue to seek ways to incorporate the mindset of these new leaders who are able to see past their differences, worship together, and be the Church of God in Virginia.

The people of my generation and older have worked and continue to work diligently to see the unity of COGVA lived out. Those efforts are to be commended, honored, and respected. We don't always see the fruits of the labor others have generated. We want to see unity by some tangible, measurable yardstick, if you will. We get frustrated with a lack of participants in specific settings, and often justifiably so. We must be diligent to build and maintain relationships with one another. This is on-going, never ends, and must be sought after with deliberation. Unity is a by-product of our salvation and thus, an indicator of our relationship with Christ.

While we work together to build relationships, it behooves us to know what we have planted, watered, and tended, is beginning to take root.

If the visibility of many cultures represented at this year's State Youth Convention of the Church of God in Virginia is any indication at all, the future of COGVA is indeed brightening!

“Do You Want To Be Made Well?”

Jesus meets a man, at the pool called Bethesda, who has been sick for 38 years. This man has been lying on a mat by the pool, hoping to be the first one in the pool when the Angel stirs the waters, so that he might be made well. However, he was so weak and feeble; somebody always beats him into the water. Jesus, knowing how long he has been sick, asks him if he wants to be made well. I find his response quite interesting. He never answers Jesus question. Instead, he gives the reason for why he cannot receive the healing offered in the pool. In John 5:8, Jesus says to the man, “Rise, take up your bed and walk”. Verse 9 goes on to tell us, “And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed and walked.”

The first point I want to make is that Jesus not only knew the man was sick, He even knew how long he had been sick. He knows all about our wounds: what or who caused them, how deep they are and how long they have been there. Just like with this man, nothing is too severe for God to heal. It does not matter if it

is a one week old, a 38 year old, or even a 98 year old wound. God sent Jesus to heal us and He did not put limitations on that healing. We find in

Psalm 107:20, “He sent His Word and healed them, and delivered them from their destruction”.

Also, we read in the Gospel of Luke 4:18, Jesus speak, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”

Another thing I find in this story comes from John 5, verses 6 and 7, when Jesus asks the man if he wants to be made well and the man’s response is not a “yes” or “no” but rather excuses for why he is not yet healed. During Jesus time on earth, we often heard Him say, “Your faith has made you well”. He didn’t say that to this man, this man did not have faith. However, God healed him despite his lack of faith.

God does not base His healing on our faith. He heals because He desires to see His children whole. Sometimes, He wants to test our faith in the situation. Other times, He simply wants to lavish His love on us, His children. In this case, this man had all but lost hope and faith in ever getting well. God chose to show His power and in doing so caused the man to have faith in Him.

This man had suffered from his ailment for 38 years. He was so weak that he could not even get himself into the pool before others. Yet, when Jesus told him to rise, verse 9 tells us he was immediately made well. When Jesus told this man to arise, He was pronouncing healing on him.

This healing was instantaneous, leaving no room for doubt and this man suddenly had hope again and faith. When God heals us, He presents us with new opportunities, opportunities to make progress, opportunities to walk in His healing. It is up to us whether we are going to stay by the pool or take up our bed and walk.



Rev. Dr. Simeon R. Green III

Wytheville FCOG Focuses on Substance Abuse

Donn Sunshine calls substance abuse the “modern day leprosy.” Because of the festering, life-draining epidemic, the pastor and his congregation at Wytheville First Church of God have a new mission.

“Everybody is touched by substance abuse in one way or another,” he said. “It affects us all. It is overwhelming law enforcement and social service agencies. We looked at how the church can make a difference and our purpose here.”

That evaluation resulted in a revised mission for the local church: “Experience Jesus: Share with Others by Wiping out Substance Abuse and Its Effects in Our Community.”

The church will incorporate the international 12-step Celebrate Recovery program in its mission. It will address all the causes of hurts and symptoms of real problems.

“It is open to anybody and everybody,” the pastor said. “It’s for people who know their life is a mess but might not know what the problem is. Whole families can attend this.”

Sunday, March 8, served as a prelude to the program. At 11 a.m., Kim Muncy and her son, Derrick Merrill, a drug overdose survivor, both from Blacksburg, shared their experiences with substance abuse and what it did to their lives.

Celebrate Recovery sessions will begin Wednesday, March 11, with dinner at 5:30 p.m. Participants will gather for a large group meeting at 6:45 p.m.

Small group sessions will begin at 7:30 p.m. They will continue until 8:30 p.m.

According to Sunshine, those interested in the program may attend the dinner and all sessions or only the classes that might apply to them.

Sessions for children and teens will be included. A nursery for babies will be provided.

Sunshine and other members of the congregation have completed the six-month training course to lead the sessions. He is a member of the Wythe-Bland Substance Abuse Coalition.

“We want this to be of real interest for the community,” Sunshine said.

Wytheville First Church of God is located at 1135 Cove Road in Wytheville. For more information, call 620-0565.

Article by: Wayne Quesenberry and he can be reached at 228-6611 Extension 20 or wquesenberry@wythenews.com. Original article found in Wytheville Enterprise – March 13, 2015 edition



VASYC Ministers to Local Food Pantry

Youth from across COGVA descended upon Charlottesville March 20-22. Convention was housed at the University Holiday Inn. They were led in worship by Brightwork – a band from Roanoke. They have shared the stage with several national touring acts including Jeremy Camp, Sanctus Real, Aaron Gillespie (The Almost/Underoath), The Afters, Mikeschair, Future of Forestry, Starfield, Revive, and many others. Rev. Jerrod Nunn brought tremendous messages from the Word of God.

In addition to great worship services, our youth provided COGVA with an example of Jesus' love by reaching out to a local food pantry and bagging apples from bushel boxes to more

useable 5 pound bags. The group was divided in to two teams, each of whom were tasked with this bagging responsibility. While one group was sorting and bagging apples in the parking lot of Holiday Inn, the other team went to the food pantry itself and provided muscle to do a variety of tasks needed in the pantry. We are truly blessed to have young people in COGVA who are not ashamed of Christ and are willing to, not only talk of Jesus' love, but to put it into practice.



Jerrod Nunn



Packing Apples for the Food Pantry



Loving Jesus by Loving Others



Communion Service

Mark Your Calendars

C.W.C/W.C.G. Spring Convention

April 17-19 Host Congregation Blacksburg FCOG - Cathy Collins, Resource Leader. More information to follow

Pastor's Boot Camp

Camp Christi
April 27-May 1 Dr. Gordon Penfold and Dr. Gary McIntosh –Resource Leaders \$475.00

Heritage Day Rally – Southeastern Association of the C.O.G. May 16 11:00 am 1607 Forest

Street CHOG Augusta, GA (See flyer included as attachment to email carrying COGVA News for more detail)

Southern Gospel

Gathering May 15-16
Chilhowie FCOG
Two Night "Kick-off" to this years annual Indoor Camp Meeting - Five Great gospel groups 7:00 Friday 6:00 Saturday. (Flyer to follow)

Indoor Camp Meeting
May 17-22 Chilhowie FCOG Host congregation

- Rev. Garry Bates – Evangelist

Middler Camp

July 8 - 11th Camp Christi
Junior/Senior High Camp
July 20 - 25th

Camp Meeting/Camp

Christi August 2 – 8,
Annual COGVA Business Meeting August 7 1:00 pm

COGVA Budget

Summary of COGVA Expenditures YTD 2014/2015

August 1, 2014 - July 31st, 2015

Categories	Budget	Aug-Oct 1st Qtr	Nov-Jan 2nd qtr	Feb 3rd Qtr	March 3rd qtr
1000 STATE OFFICE					
1100 Business Office	\$3,800.00				
Postage		\$98.00	\$101.55		
Telephone		\$ 129.29	\$122.91	\$40.80	\$41.12
Internet		\$108.00	\$108.00	\$36.00	\$36.00
Office Supplies		\$233.46	\$ 175.53		\$32.68
Office (Word)		\$29.97	\$29.97	\$9.99	\$9.99
Web Page		\$29.82	\$29.82		
New Web Site			\$173.85		
Accounting (taxes)		\$110.00	\$235.00		
Yearbook					
Computer AntiVirus					
Safe Deposit Box Fee					
Credit Card Finance Charge		\$73.04	\$51.36	\$23.35	\$23.58
New Computer/applications					
1200 Insurance	\$14,300.00				
Property		\$2,951.75	\$ 2,951.75		
W/C		\$348.25	\$348.25		
Special Risk			\$24.00		
Van/Camp Christi			\$123.00		
1300 Office Manager	\$14,437.50	\$3,609.36	\$3,609.36	\$1,203.12	\$1,203.12
1400 Income Taxes and Social Security	\$3,320.00				
VA State					
Federal		\$834.83	\$961.04	\$293.34	\$293.37
SUBTOTAL	\$35,857.50				
2000 STATE MINISTER					
2100 Salary Package (Salary, House, Etc.)	\$9,000.00	\$2,250.00	\$750.00	\$	
2200 Travel & Expenses	\$4,000.00		\$1,456.34		
2300 Expenses for State and National Meetings	\$2,600.00		\$595.20	\$621.36	
SUBTOTAL	\$15,600.00				
3000 EXECUTIVE COUNCIL/STANDING MINISTRIES					
3100 Executive Board	\$1,000.00		\$197.94		
3200 Ministry of Church Service/Credentials	\$300.00				
3300 Ministry of Christian Education	\$75.00	\$28.91			
3400 Ministry of Evangelism	\$75.00				

3600 Ministry of Program	\$75.00				
3800 Ministerial Fellowship	\$800.00				
3900 Church Property Team	\$75.00				
SUBTOTAL	\$2,400.00				
5000 PROPERTY AND MAINTENANCE					
5110 Camp Bedford					
5110 Caretaker	\$5,000.00	\$1,250.01	\$1,250.01	\$416.67	\$416.67
Health Insurance	\$840.00	\$210.00	\$210.00	\$70.00	\$70.00
5120 Campground Expenses (Maintenance)	\$1,000.00		\$ 80.00		
Vehicle Maintenance	\$300.00				
Camp Bedford Mkt/Advertising	\$500.00				
5140 Utilities	\$5,000.00				
Power		\$570.03	\$1,310.75	\$718.07	\$694.90
Propane		\$55.00	\$334.37	\$55.00	\$30.00
Telephone		\$85.04	\$92.94	\$39.38	\$39.20
SUBTOTAL	\$12,640.00				
5200 Camp Christi					
5210 Caretaker	\$26,565.12	\$6,641.28	\$6,641.28	\$2,213.76	\$2,213.76
5220 Health Insurance	\$7,000.00	\$1,788.00	\$1,788.00	\$596.00	\$596.00
5250 Utilities	\$12,500.00				
Power		\$3,798.18	\$2,820.71	\$ 779.74	\$905.94
Water		\$942.56	\$267.14	\$30.65	\$30.64
Propane		\$256.84			
5260 Maintenance	\$4,000.00	\$333.33	\$333.33		
Camp Christi Mkt/Advertising	\$500.00				
5270 Capital Improvements	\$1,500.00		\$700.00		
5280 Vehicle Maintenance	\$500.00				
5300 Legal Fees	\$400.00	\$60.50	\$9.16	\$45.75	
5400 Ministry Expenses	\$300.00				
Christmas Bonus			\$1,300.00		
SUBTOTAL	\$53,265.12				
TOTAL	\$119,762.62	\$26,825.45	\$29,209.38	\$7,192.98	\$6,636.97
Income		\$27,808.59	\$29,388.27	\$4,962.94	\$6,891.31
Difference		\$875.14	\$178.89	\$(2,230.04)	\$254.34

Church of God in Virginia

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.virginiachurchofgod.com

COGVA News Submission Guidelines

COGVA News is a tool for the Church of God in Virginia to disseminate news of the Church at large and has begun to grow where clearer guidelines are necessary. Under direction from the Executive Board in their meeting of March 13, 2015, COGVA News will operate temporarily under the following guidelines. What follows is a work in progress as other State Newsletters are consulted.

All articles should be limited to a length of 500 – 700 words. Submission to COGVA News implies permission to edit submitted articles for clarity and space availability..

About the Church of God in Virginia..

The Church of God in Virginia consists of 50 churches across the Commonwealth and according to current accounting serve over 2,500 constituents each

Priorities of space will be given to items of news of local congregations/ministries, COGVA functions, regional activities, and COGVA Entities (C.W.C/W.C.G., M.C.G., Christian Education, and all ministries of COGVA).

Non-news items and editorials must be original to the author and quotes attributed to its proper sources.

Priorities of space will be given to items of news of local church news, COGVA Ministries.

Submission of articles should be limited to a minimum of one article per local church/ministry per

quarter. A quarter will be defined as Aug.-Oct., Nov. – Jan., Feb. – Apr., and May –Jul.

Please remember, these guidelines are a work in progress and a future set of guidelines governing COGVA News will ultimately be submitted to the Executive Board of COGVA, the entity to which COGVA News holds itself accountable.

Sunday Morning. Our current State Leadership consists of Chair - Rev. Gertrude Goode, Vice-Chair – Rev. Steve Hency, Secretary – Rev. Sylvia

McDorman, and State Minister – Dr. Bob Neace.

CHURCH OF GOD IN VIRGINIA

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